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fancied superiority, have sneered at this institution amongst merchants and the followers of commerce, amongst those who, they say, ought only to calculate gain or loss, and whose minds they would nail down to the desk. But these men in the little pride of a college education, or in the mean envy of an honourable exertion they cannot make, forget the true character of a merchant, forget that the basis on which it is formed is even more extended than any of those termed the learned professions. That it requires as much as they do, ease of manners, independence of mind, ardor, perseverance, industry, research; that it excels them all in the universality of its speculations, in its tendency to dissipate prejudices and to remove the petty distinc-

tions of society, arising from pride and vanity. They forget that merchants are men, and that in consequence they ought to seek to improve themselves, not only in what contributes to forward them in their profession, but in those studies which can soothe the passions, which can ameliorate the heart, excite energy, confer knowledge, and lead to virtue by the path of duty. That such may be the conduct of the members of the Belfast Historic Society is my most ardent wish.

Gentlemen, I thank you for your patient attention, and give me leave to say, I shall ever bear in grateful remembrance, the honour so kindly conferred on me of opening the present session.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF DISTINGUISHED PERSONS.

MEMOIRS OF JOHN JEBB, M.D. F.R.S.

"Were I, in the education of a youth in whose happiness I felt the warmest interest, to select models of excellence worthy of his study and contemplation, I know not of any character, ancient or modern, to which I should sooner direct his attention, than that of John Jebb. That most excellent person, in whom we behold the happy union of humility and dignity, modesty and wisdom, genuine piety and genuine patriotism, blessed with a mind imbued with science, a soul truly elevated, an intellect of the superior order, and under circumstances however discouraging, ever having a courageous confidence in the ultimate triumph of truth; so gifted, no interests, no passions, had ever power to cloud his judgment."

Major Cartwright's Letters.

JOHN JEBB, was the son of the Rev. Dr. John Jebb, Dean of Cashel. He was born in the year 1736; he received his ear-

ly school education at different schools in England and in Ireland, and was admitted a pensioner in the University of Dublin in 1753, under the tuition of Dr. Leland. In the succeeding year Mr. Jebb obtained several academic prizes.

In the summer vacation he again crossed the channel, and came into England, and was once more destined to change the place of his education. In ordinary cases, such frequent removal is unfavourable to real improvement; and being liable to unsettle the attention, to derange the acquirements already made, and to increase the difficulties and discouragements in attaining the elementary parts of language and science, is sometimes fatal to a young mind. Very fortunately for Mr. Jebb, it seems to have been almost indifferent to his liter-

ary progress, in how many places he received the lessons of instruction. In November he was admitted into Peter-house College, Cambridge, shortly after which Doctor Law, since Bishop of Carlisle, became master of that college, who seems to have been frequently consulted by him, and much confided in at a subsequent period.

Early in 1756, Mr. Jebb was seized with a violent fever at Cambridge, which obliged him afterwards to go to Bath, for the better re-establishment of his health. As soon as he recovered his strength, he returned again to the university. Sometime in the month of May, he kept his first act in the sophs' school, and passed the summer vacation in college, when he applied himself to close and diligent study, in order to recover the time he had lost, by the interruption of sickness, and to prepare himself for the public exercises of the following winter, previously to taking his degree.

In 1757, he had the honour to be admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts as second Wrangler, that celebrated mathematician Dr. Waring having obtained the first place. Having taken his degree, he devoted much of his time to private tuition. His unwearied diligence, in conducting the studies of six or eight young persons, at separate parts of the day, besides the pursuit of his own improvement, are proofs of an attention and labour, not only unusual at his early age, but frequently more than equal to the constitution and abilities of the most able and assiduous at any period of life.

But, notwithstanding the hindrance arising from this course of tutorage, he obtained in 1758, the second prize of fifteen guineas, annually given, by the members of the

university, to the authors of the best compositions in latin prose, being middle or senior bachelor of arts.

In 1761 he became fellow of Peter-house, and the next year he was elected in conjunction with Mr. Watson, afterwards Bishop of Landaff, to one of the most important offices in the academic studies at Cambridge, that of moderator in the sophs' school. He was ordained deacon and subsequently admitted into priest's orders.

The character which Mr. Jebb had now established in the university gave him a great influence, which he was incapable of using corruptly. At this time the high-stewardship became vacant, and the two candidates were Lord Hardwick and Lord Sandwich. The former was supported by the Whig interest, while the other, then Secretary of State, wielded the whole power of the court. In this contest Mr. Jebb took the most zealous and decided interest, notwithstanding the most pointed solicitations on the one hand, and the most trying menaces on the other; menaces which after several years of interval were fulfilled, when the whole power of the court headed by Lords North, Hillsborough, Sandwich, &c. appeared in array against his being elected to succeed Dr. Petit, one of the physicians of St. Bartholomew's hospital. It must be acknowledged however, that in the interim, his political sins had extremely multiplied in their estimation, by his continued efforts to procure short parliaments, and a more equal representation of the people.

Mr. Jebb after he had taken orders was collated to a small living in Bedfordshire, by the then Bishop of Ely, and he was afterwards elected to the rectory of Ovington by the university.

About this time he married Anne*, the eldest daughter of the Rev. James Torkington and the lady Dorothea Sherrard, daughter of the Earl of Harborough.

Early in the year 1765, Mr. Jebb, together with the Rev. Robert Thorpe, fellow of Peterhouse, the Rev. George Wollaston, fellow of Sidney college, published in a small quarto, a comment on those parts of Sir Isaac Newton's "*Principia*," which more immediately relate to the system of the world. The title of the joint work of these able and judicious philosophers, was "*Excerpta quædam e Newtoni principiis philosophiæ naturalis, cum notis variorum.*" But as it was the produce of the united judgment and labours of three friends, without any possibility of discriminating their respective shares, it must remain the undivided and honourable property of them all. The university of Cambridge, continues to bear testimony to the utility and excellence of this work, by the general use of it, in the course of academical education.

It will not be thought foreign to our purpose, to introduce here an observation of a friend, who considers it as an happy circumstance to have been the pupil of Mr. Jebb, while at the university of Cambridge; and who is grateful, in the acknowledgment of his tutor's excellence, by more substantial and unequivocal proof, than the cold confession of the relation in which they once stood to each other. "When I had the pleasure of seeing you the last time," writes he, "I mentioned to you, that Dr. Jebb, in his mathematical lectures, used, in concluding Newton's '*Principia*,' to insist on the Newtonian system,

as the strongest, and, indeed, only rational demonstration of the existence of a Deity. In his opinion we were not to form our ideas of a God, from abstruse, metaphysical reasoning, but from the consideration of his works. Thus, he would endeavour to form an idea of the strength of the Deity, by calculating the force with which the planet Saturn must be projected to have its greatest velocity; or of his wisdom and consummate contrivance as an artist, by selecting the only law by which the force of gravity could vary so as to ensure the orbit to return into itself. On this account, he always expressed particular admiration of the last chapter in Maclaurin's '*View of Newton's philosophy*,' and often lamented that he had not lived to finish it, as it contained, in his idea, by much the best demonstration of the existence and attribute of the Deity.

"Another opinion of Dr. Jebb's, which struck me as a most manly and noble instance of his reliance on the force of truth, was his wish to see every doctrine whatever fairly discussed on both sides. He considered a man who published a serious argument against the Christian religion, or against the existence of a Deity, as by no means criminal, if his real sentiments accorded with his publication. He considered, that such publications, or, indeed, any other which contained serious argument, and not mere ridicule, might, if founded in error, be comforted by the same channel through which they were propagated. But those publications which either endeavour to throw ridicule on serious subjects, or to seduce, by inflaming the passions, he utterly abhorred and detested."

After the publication of the "*Excerpta*," Mr. Jebb removed to Potton, in Bedfordshire, and settled in hired lodgings there, with a view

* For a biographical sketch of this excellent lady, see the *Belfast Magazine*, volume X. page 25.

of being near to Gamlingay; which vicarage, however, he resigned the 19th of August, 1765, having held it not quite twelve months. But he continued at Potton from April to November; during which time, besides a great variety of other employments, "he read through the pentateuch in Hebrew, harmonized the gospels, read about five hundred verses in the Koran, and some other things in Arabic, and studied geography." In the latter end of December, he returned to Cambridge, and resided in a house in St. Andrew's parish. In the following spring, March 28, 1766, he entered on the curacy of St. Andrew's church.

On Mr. Jebb's re-settlement in Cambridge, he again resumed the office and labour of private tutor, and had seven pupils attending him every day; adding to the accustomed labours of this employment, lectures in Butler's Analogy, on Sunday evenings. He also read lectures at Trinity-hall, in Tully's offices, during the two first terms of this year; and applied himself to the study of French and Italian, under the instruction of a friend.

October 10, 1766, Mr. Jebb and Mr. Watson, were again elected moderators, and at the annual election, in the following year, Mr. Jebb, was re-elected, and for the last time, on the 10th of October, 1768.

In the year 1767, Mr. Jebb continued to take private pupils; to whom he also read lectures in the Greek Testament, on Sunday evenings; he likewise attended to his share in the conduct of the disputations in the schools, and to the care of the parish church of St. Andrew.

Mr. Chappelow, professor of Arabic, died on the 14th of January, 1768. Upon his decease, Mr. Jebb offered himself a candidate for the

professorship. He had previously qualified himself in the Arabic language, by much application and study. The competitors for this office were few, and the general voice of the university decided in favour of Mr. Jebb. There arose, however, a candidate, whose success, superseded Mr. Jebb's well-founded pretensions; and that candidate was his near relation, and, I believe at that time, his friend. The person here meant was Dr. Samuel Hallifax, who was then the representative, or deputy, of Dr. Ridlington, professor of civil law, to whose chair he was considered by himself as heir apparent, and to which he actually succeeded in about two years afterwards. When the university were disposed to be friendly to Mr. Jebb, it is to be lamented that he found an adversary, who, from academical connexions, had the greater interest among the heads of houses, with whom lay the election. It is also to be regretted, that the same gentleman, who was so well assured of succeeding soon to the chair of civil law, the immediate line in which he was engaged, should impatiently seize the passing offer of the Arabic professorship, to the prejudice of another, who would so honourably have filled it.

Learning may more frequently fail of its pecuniary rewards, even in those seminaries appropriated for the cultivation of it, than of the satisfaction it yields its owners in the prosecution of their studies. Mr. Jebb considered the advantages of the knowledge of the oriental languages as fully equivalent to the labour of attaining them. In his theological pursuits, he was ever desirous of drinking from the fountain-head; and he used frequently to express the high pleasure and satisfaction he derived from his acquaint-

ance with the languages of the scriptures: and from the correspondent and collateral languages, which so frequently throw light upon, and illustrate those of the sacred text.*

On the 21st of November, 1768, he entered on his course of lectures on the Greek Testament; concerning which, the "Short account" he afterwards published, will afford the best satisfaction.

Dr. Hinchliffe, master of Trinity college, and vice-chancellor of Cambridge, drew the university into the tender of no less acceptable an offering to the minister, than a reprobation of the principles of the popular party of that day. An address to the king was offered to the senate on the 17th of March, 1769, and carried. Mr. Jebb put in his non-placet in the regent-house; and, upon a division, only the late Mr. Tyson of Benet college voted with him. The servility of several addresses on this occasion, can only be equalled by that from the university of Cambridge; but without entering into the political grievances of that day, in justification of Mr. Jebb's negative voice, it will merely be necessary to refer the reader to the remembrance of those proceedings of the ministry in respect to the rights of election, which even the House of Commons itself afterwards expunged from their journals.

These digressions did not interrupt Mr. Jebb's lectures on the New Testament, his private philosophical lectures, or his own general studies.

The patronage of Mr. Jebb,

* In a private manuscript note, dated subsequent to his second canvass for the Arabic professorship, the following resolution was written. "Resolved to study the Koran in the original, with a view of extracting from thence evidences and explanations of the gospel."

which, in every view, would have done honour to the reputation of the university of Cambridge, was reserved for a private gentleman, except his election into the small living of Ovington, before-mentioned. On July 10, 1769, he was instituted to the vicarage of Flixton, near Bungay, in Suffolk, on the presentation of William Adair, esq. And, on the 4th of April, 1770, he was instituted to the united rectories of Homersfield and St. Cross, parishes contiguous to Flixton, upon the same presentation. He was also in the summer of the same year, nominated chaplain to Robert Earl of Harborough. In consequence of the accession of these preferments, though not considerable in themselves, he resigned, sometime in the month of October, 1771, the rectory of Ovington, which he had received from the university.

The summer of 1770, he again spent at Bungay, and was chiefly employed in perfecting his harmony of the gospels, and in superintending a house of industry, then lately established in his neighbourhood in Suffolk.

Dr. Hallifax succeeding to the professorship of civil law, in the month of October, 1770, upon the death of Dr. Ridlington, Mr. Jebb once more solicited that of Arabic, which Dr. Hallifax then vacated: but as he had, in his theological lectures, greatly offended the majority of the electors, he was again disappointed. When he was opposed by Dr. Hallifax, the electors were well inclined to do justice to his learning; on his second canvass for the same office, the spirit of inquiry which he had raised among the younger students, was imputed to him as a crime deserving the resentment of their seniors.

The enemies of Mr. Jebb, not satisfied with defeating his honourable prospects, had recourse to

misrepresentation; the wicked, although familiar, weapon of intemperate and ambitious zeal. Wounded and aggrieved, as he conceived, in his reputation; and, unjustly cut off from receiving the less disinterested, but not dishonourable, advantages of his labours, by an open and absolute prohibition of attendance upon his lectures, extending to all persons "in statu popullari;" he determined to submit his vindication and plan to the free and impartial voice of an unprejudiced public. Influenced by these motives, he published, in the winter of 1770, his "Short account of theological lectures," which was well received and much esteemed. Subsequent incidents, occasioned a second edition, in March 1772, "corrected and much enlarged."

On the 21st of March, 1771, Mr. Jebb kept his act in the divinity school, under Dr. Rutherford, then regius professor of divinity. His question on this occasion, had been before maintained in the same place by Dr. Law, bishop of Carlisle. The question, as it was proposed for disputation, was as follows.—"Status animarum in intervallo mortis atque resurrectionis agentium quicquam, sive sentientium ex sacris literis colligi nequit." The disputation was conducted with ability and politeness on both sides, and continued for a longer time than is generally employed in these exercises. The second question, which is always proposed by the professor, was, "Epistola ad Hebræos a Paulo scripta est?"

Early in the year 1771, the design was formed of applying to Parliament for relief in the matter of subscription to the liturgy and thirty-nine articles of the church of England. Mr. Jebb was acquainted with and assisted in it by his counsels, from a very early period. He

came to London upon this errand, in the month of April; and on July the 17th, he attended the first general meeting at the Feathers-tavern, in consequence of a public advertisement for that purpose; at which time he was appointed one of the "committee, to prepare a petition to Parliament to obtain redress in the matter of subscription to the liturgy and thirty-nine articles of the church of England."

At a meeting of that committee, on the 20th of September following, a draft of a petition was laid before them, and after some revision, approved. And the petition so agreed on, was afterwards adopted, at the second general meeting, on the 25th of the same month.

In the interval between such second general meeting and the following one, fixed for December the 11th, or, more accurately, very soon after the 25th of September, it was judged expedient to circulate an explicit account of the plan and design of the association: and though such paper was not formally avowed, by vote, either of the committee, or general meeting, it was unanimously approved by the committee, and printed at their joint expense. It has generally been denominated "the circular letter;" and this letter was the production of Mr. Jebb, subject indeed to some few corrections, which the several members of the committee suggested.

From the month of June to October 26, 1771, Mr. Jebb chiefly resided at Bungay; and was engaged in the ministerial duties of his parishes in the neighbourhood, and in vindicating the cause of the petitioning clergy in the public papers. During this time also, he got by heart the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians.

As Mr. Jebb had been appointed at the meeting in September, of the

committee to "to consider of proper steps to circulate the petition then approved;" so that on December 11, he, together with his former associates, and several others, were appointed a committee, "for the purpose of considering the proper ways and means of introducing the petition into the House of Commons."

The attention of the university was much occupied, at this time, in the discussion of the right of Protestant churches to require subscription to systematical confessions of faith and doctrine. Doctor Samuel Hallifax, then bishop of Gloucester, appeared among the most prompt and ready of those champions, who, having denied the right of the church of Rome, claimed it, as belonging to the church of England: he also professed to defend the specific doctrines which are contained in the formularies of the established church. It might seem invidious to say more of his labours on this occasion; but it certainly would not have lessened the estimation, either of his judgment or his zeal, in the opinion of his auditors, had he spared that inundation of personal abuse of Mr. Jebb, which would have disgraced a much superior composition, and, assuredly, added no beauty to his own. The sermons, in the subsequent corrected state, in which they are given to the public, are now only memorable for the singular futility of their argument; and would have been forgotten, but for the masterly, though severe, letter they occasioned to be addressed to the author. This letter was generally ascribed to the Rev. Samuel Blackall, then fellow of Emmanuel college.

In January 1772, the letters which Mr. Jebb had written in the course of the winter, in the *Whitehall Evening Post*, under the signature of "Paulinus," were collected, revised, and re-published together,

in a pamphlet, at the instance of some particular friends. They were much read and circulated; and were generally understood to render essential service to the cause of the petitioning clergy previously to the introduction of their petition into the House of Commons. Notwithstanding which, it is apprehended, that the author's sentiments concerning the reformation of the established church, underwent some further considerable changes in the subsequent part of his life.

Thus much is observed, only to shew the personal concern and share Mr. Jebb took in the whole of that business, without any intention of entering into a detail of the proceedings of the association.

How zealous he was in this cause, and how consistent his ideas were, may be seen by an extract from a letter to a friend, who had proposed as a middle way, that the apostles' creed should be substituted for the thirty-nine articles; an answer at once a proof of his attachment to the gospel, of his morality, and of his candour.

"When I see the little effect which the best principles and modes of faith have upon the practice, I am sometimes, in a desponding hour, inclined to think, that a successful contest for the prevalence of any one set of opinions, is scarcely worthy of the pains and trouble, that are often taken about them. And, that it would be better for each, to act his part, in the little sphere of domestic duties, which heaven hath assigned him, than to perplex himself and others with unedifying disputes. But, on the contrary, when I think that we are imperfect judges of the operation of principles, and that the almighty hath thought proper, in reality, so far to interfere in the cause of truth, as to give a revelation to mankind; it certainly

must be his will that we preserve this sacred deposit, pure and untainted, from those human mixtures and corruptions, which have obscured the knowledge of God's law, in every other nation under heaven. If the word of God be not bound by explanatory articles of faith and doctrine; if no emoluments are annexed to particular confessions; no terrors appended to opinions, that word will prevail and operate in the manner, which, from the circumstances of the revelation, we may collect, would be most agreeable to the intentions of the Almighty. It would operate by its native charms, approving themselves to the consciences of each, and diffuse itself by a manifestation of its effects on the life and conversation of the true believer. All helps and assistances should be discarded, which may have an equivocal effect. In this view of the gospel, human policy should ever be disclaimed. The utmost of man's interference should be, an earnest and constant endeavour, to prevent the narrow schemes, and interested projects of this world, from deforming its native purity, and absolute perfection. Under this idea of things, I view our late application, not in the light of a petition for relief to a few individuals, who cannot bring the articles of our church to square with their own private interpretation of scripture, but, as an attempt to restore the genuine splendor of the gospel, by vindicating the right of every individual in these kingdoms, to interpret scripture for himself. Which can never be exercised, while there is any temptation held forth, by the powers of this world, to dissemble or prevaricate in a single instance. For this reason, the apostles' creed is as exceptionable, as our present subscription; nor would I consent to the fabrication of any systematical confession,

although I myself was intrusted with the execution. The naked gospel subscribed as the word of God, is the only subscription I can possibly petition to have substituted in the place of the present. The particular formulary in which this declaration is made, is matter of little moment, provided the formulary be clear and express.

“With respect to our willingness, to acknowledge the lawful authority of bishops, and to assent to the use of the liturgy; those matters are pretty well taken care of by the oaths of canonical obedience, and the act of uniformity. They are questions, totally distinct from that we are engaged in; and, as our adversaries know full well, that we have no objections to either of these matters, they will never be mollified by any declarations we can make. But it is advisable you will say, to gain the good opinion of moderate men. We have not, as yet offended any moderate men. And those half-friends, who, at present, keep aloof, have other reasons for their conduct, which no declarations of our innocence can subdue. It is urged, by many, as a reason for not meddling in our affair, that, were the present articles set aside, as we desire, we should next labour to establish socinian articles in their room. In short, there is no end to answering objections or of softening the opposition. Let us keep our grand point, viz. the sufficiency of the scriptures steadily in view. It is a reasonable and intelligible kind of union, which cannot easily be broken. And while we adhere to it, a difference of opinion may indeed arise as to the time, and mode of our operations, but, we shall ever be a respectable and consistent body of men, who will, at last, appear to have hit upon the shortest and most practicable, as

well as most justifiable method, of closing, for ever, all prejudicial dissensions in matters of faith.

"You see the state of my mind upon this subject: you see I am thoroughly resolved never to give my consent to any measure, which, in the most distant manner, implies a departure from our original ground. But, at the same time, with respect to the mode of carrying on our attacks against this usurped power of dogmatizing in the church of Christ, whether by the old petition, by a new one, or by bill, as having no settled opinion of my own, or unable to advise, I shall, with pleasure, fall in with the opinion of the majority of our friends."

The summer of the year 1772, Mr. Jebb passed at Bungay; where he prepared lectures on St. Paul's epistles, and wrote much for the public papers. On Sunday, the 27th of December 1772, he preached before the university; and as the occasion demanded, considered the question concerning subscription, in as full extent as the time and place would admit. The very next day, Monday the 28th of December, he again preached before the same audience; a sermon on the spirit of benevolence, which he soon after published; inscribing it to "the ingenuous youths who had honoured with their attendance, his theological lectures."

This sermon was re-printed, in the year 1780, and again in 1782; and the circulation of it widely extended, in the midst of the agitation of great political questions. To these editions, were prefixed the following advertisement by the editor:

"At a time, when disputes run so high, as to endanger that affection we owe to each other, as children of one common parent, who is

the author of all good, it hath frequently been suggested by many who wish to promote that universal benevolence, recommended in the following sermon, that re-printing it at this time, might tend to moderate our resentments, and induce us even in the midst of contending parties to remember that we are brethren.

"With a view of curbing the violence of passion, without impairing the vigour of our virtuous efforts for that which we think right, leave hath been obtained of the author to re-publish this discourse: and it is now humbly inscribed to the people of England, Ireland and America, by their sincere friend and humble servant, the editor."

During the months of February, March, and April, 1773, Mr. Jebb was particularly employed in attendance on the business of the clergy associated for obtaining relief in the matter of subscription; and, on the questions relating to the establishing annual examinations at Cambridge.

Impressed with a conviction of the benefits resulting from public examinations of the students, during his short residence in Dublin college, he laboured with the utmost and most persevering assiduity to establish the same at Cambridge. The history of his labours and efforts for this purpose, would, of itself, form no inconsiderable work, if given in detail, and would be most worthy of being preserved. He has in part performed this task in his "Remarks" on the subject; but the dispute continued some time after the publication of the last edition of that tract, and consequently the account falls short of the final issue of this important business.

(To be continued.)